



A Newsletter for NEOCAP Staff, Family and Stakeholders

# NEO NEWS

The NEO NEWS was established in December 2016 as a quarterly newsletter highlighting current events at NEOCAP and throughout the NEOCAP region.

## Message from the Director .....

### The Certainty of Retirement!

Benjamin Franklin once said, "There are only two things certain in life – **death and taxes.**" I may not be a founding father, but I think **retirement** is another certainty. One day, those of us who have spent our lives working to earn a living will undoubtedly meet retirement. I have seen many family members, friends, and colleagues pick the date and time to retire; some are not so fortunate, and the decision was made for them because of old age or ill health. When my friend and colleague turns over his keys at the end of December 2023, he will be among the fortunate, with health and vitality to continue to prosper and enjoy life. *Vince, you picked your date and time; well done, friend!*

Sincerely,

Jake E. Jones, Sr.



Jake E. Jones, Sr.  
Executive Director



Vincent Peterson I  
Officer-in-Charge  
Trumbull County Adult  
Probation  
1990 to 2023

### Inside this issue Pg.

Medical Carts	2
College Job Fair	2
Santa's Giving Tree	2
J. Melvin's 20 <sup>th</sup> Ann.	3
<b>Promotions</b>	3
- Samantha Neiheisel	
- Sarah Scarnecchia	
- Lauren Morrow	
Tina Davenport	4
Promotion	
<b>New Staff</b>	4
- Tracy Kirnec	
- Sara Fusco	
- Andre'a Lawrence	
ODRC Visit	5
Chief PO Gratitude	5
Storage Shed	5
Judge C. Rice Visit	6
Nicole Walker: FGB	6
Catholic Charities	6
TCHS Oktoberfest	7
Holiday Greetings	7
<b>Business Report</b>	8
- Floor Project	
- Dental Plan	
- Conversion Plan	

# FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

## Medical Carts Effective and Efficient

Residents taking prescription medications reporting to the medical room at both the Male and Female Facilities has ended. No longer will the medical space be occupied with residents coming in and out for hours on end to take their prescription meds. No longer will the medical staff be unable to carry out their task due to medications being dispensed. All that changed on August 15, 2023, at the Male Facility and August 16, 2023, at the Female Facility with the implementation of large medical carts on wheels that can be filled with resident medications and easily transported to various locations where Compliance Assistants can administer medication. From all indicators, the carts are effective, efficient, and successful.



## NEOCAP Participates in College Job Fair



**LAKE ERIE**  
COLLEGE



On September 14, 2023, Deputy Director Kim Massary and Clinical Director Kristina Henik participated in a Criminal Justice/ Psychology/ Law Fair held at Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio. NEOCAP was one of many criminal justice agencies represented at the Law Fair. Ms. Massary is optimistic that some young men and women who visited the NEOCAP table and expressed interest in the facility might pursue employment or an internship at the agency. Eric Evans, a Lake Erie College employee, expressed gratitude for Kim and Kristina's involvement in the college's special event.



## STAFF CONTINUES IT'S SANTA'S GIVING TREE PROJECT

Each year the Holiday Committee selects local schools or non-profit agencies that serve children to be the beneficiary of SANTA's Giving Tree project. The project's goals include gifts, food, and other essentials to improve children's and their families' holidays. Last year, the Salvation Army and Some Place Safe received NEOCAP's Christmas giving. Children attending Warren City PK-8th grade school were the recipients in prior years. This year, the committee extended the gift offering to the children of current NEOCAP residents. Eighteen residents, made up of male and female residents, met the criteria to participate in the project. Numerous staff graciously purchased the suggested gifts on the giving tree tags, making Christmas a little more special for the children and the residents.



The Giving Tree





Jennifer Melvin  
2003 to 2023

# Milestones

## 20th Anniversary! 2003 TO 2023

Jennifer Melvin was hired as a part-time Resident Assistant on December 29, 2003. Jen worked in almost every capacity as she climbed the proverbial ladder – starting at the bottom of the security/operations side of the table of the organization and twenty years later directing the day-to-day functions of the Female Facility.

Not only has Jen grown in responsibilities over the past two decades, but she has also developed expertise in providing effective evidence-based treatment to the offender population. Her intellect and love for academics that made her a Magna Cum Laude graduate from Kent State University in 2003 has continued at NEOCAP.

She has obtained a master's degree in criminal justice studies from the University of Cincinnati and has become a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor III all since joining the NEOCAP team.

As the Director at the Female Facility, Jen serves on the agency's Management Team. Congratulations to Jennifer for this milestone accomplishment.



Samantha Neiheisel

## Congratulations Samantha!

Congratulations to Samantha "Sam" Neiheisel on her promotion to Admissions Administrator. Throughout Sam's 11 years at NEOCAP, she has been dedicated, hardworking, and committed to helping those we serve to address their criminogenic needs and improve their lives. She has held various positions at NEOCAP, providing her extensive experience in program delivery, assessment, and leadership. Sam, without question, possesses the education, certification, and skills needed to take on this new challenge.



Sarah Scarnecchia

## Compliments to Sarah!

On September 20, 2023, Sarah Scarnecchia was promoted to the Program Specialist for the Blue House. For the past five years, Sarah has been committed to the goals and mission of NEOCAP. As a Case Manager, she was responsible for various treatment duties and assignments that have helped her hone her ability to handle crises, build her interpersonal skills, and make her a solid communicator. We look forward to watching Sarah grow and develop here at NEOCAP.



Lauren Morrow

## Hooray to Lauren!

On October 1, 2023, Lauren was promoted to a Community Specialist position. Lauren came to work at NEOCAP in July 2023 as a Resident Supervisor at the Female Facility. Lauren is a recent graduate from the University of Akron with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Over these past several months working as an RS she has been challenged to learn the NEOCAP policy and procedures as well as how to effectively work with the offender population. Lauren will have a learning curve, however, under the supervision of Samantha Neiheisel she should make a smooth transition into her new role.

# STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



Tina Davenport

## Congratulations Tina!

On November 28, 2023, Tina Davenport was promoted to the Compliance Manager position. Tina will manage the residents' Commissary System and assist with residents' incoming property process. Over the past nine years, Tina has been committed to carrying out her Resident Supervisor duties and responsibilities in the most professional manner. She has demonstrated her commitment to the residents and the program—serving on various committees, taking on the Property Manager's responsibilities, and maintaining an exemplary attendance record. We are confident that Tina has the skills and commitment to successfully take on this new challenge.



Tracy Kirnec

## Welcome Tracy!

On September 21, 2023, Ms. Tracy Kirnec joined the NEOCAP team as Administrative Secretary. Tracy developed her business management and office secretarial skills, working as the office manager of her family-owned business (All American Wheels) for nearly twenty years. Preparing documents and reports, dealing with customers, vendors, and the public, and filing and organizing business affairs have become second nature to Tracy. Additionally, Tracy is a certified Ohio Notary. Her skill set should serve her well as she transitions into her job duties and responsibilities.



Sara Fusco

## Welcome Sara!

Sara Fusco joined the NEOCAP team on October 2<sup>nd</sup> as a Case Manager in the Blue House. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Penn State University and her Master's Degree in Social Work from Edinboro University. She brings several years of experience working with people who struggle with substance abuse issues and the offender population. She is passionate about helping others and has done so by providing group therapy, individual sessions and case management. Additionally, she spent four (4) years as the Drug Court Coordinator in Mercer County, PA, where she was responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the Drug Court program. Sara is excited to bring her skill set to NEOCAP where she hopes to continue helping offenders reduce their risk for recidivism through the application of evidence-based practices.



Andre 'a Lawrence

## Welcome Andre'a !

Andre'a Lawrence joined the NEOCAP team on October 13<sup>th</sup> as a Case Manager for Unit 1, Orientation and Level I residents at the Male Facility. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Criminology and Justice Studies from Kent State University. She spent several months working with the Trumbull County Children Services Board as an intake case worker. During her time with Children Services, she was frequently in situations that required strong interpersonal skills, a level head and de-escalation techniques in order to protect all parties involved. She is excited to be working at an agency where she can apply what she learned in college as she is now working with the criminal offender population. Her background working in high-stress situations coupled with her formal education, training and her desire to learn will serve her well as she takes on this new challenge of Case Management in a CBCF.



# Partnerships and Collaboration

## Officials from ODRC Visit Facilities!

On October 3, 2023, Chief Chris Galli of the Bureau of Community Sanctions, a division of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC), and ODRC Deputy Director Roger Wilson



**Resident Supervisor Kelsey Woissel conducts a tour of the NEOCAP Painesville facility with ODRC staff Chris Galli (blue shirt) and Roger Wilson (Red shirt).**

spent time touring both NEOCAP locations and meeting with agency management staff. Mr. Galli is making a concerted effort to visit all Ohio community-based facilities. Long-time ODRC staff Roger Wilson, who recently assumed the Deputy Director role, introduced himself and became more familiar with NEOCAP.

Executive Director Jake Jones said that the timing of the visits could not have been better as he and management team members prepared to submit the Capital Projects Request to ODRC. According to Jones, "The Warren facility needs a Generator that covers 100% of the facility. Replacing the Handicap lift, replacing the Fire Alarm System, and replacing the Drop Ceiling Tiles are all priorities in the next capital request. Mr. Galli and Mr. Wilson could see firsthand various targeted areas for repair or replacement."



**NEOCAP Administrators escort Chris Galli and Roger Wilson on a tour of the NEOCAP Warren facility 10/3/2023.**



**Kristina Henik conducting Case Planning training with Adult Probation Staff on 09/15/2023**

## Chief PO Expresses Gratitude and Appreciation!

I just wanted to take a minute to express my appreciation for your staff overall, but especially Kim [Massary] and Kristina [Henik]. They both have offered training at my request recently and as always, the sessions were informative and incredibly useful. I appreciate that they took time out to help this department and your [Executive Director Jake Jones] willingness to allow them to do so. All the feedback I have received has been positive, especially the new staff exposed to them for the first time.

Just a note of thank you. I hope to arrange a facility tour for the new hires soon.

Sincerely,

Tracy S. Hunt  
Chief Probation Officer



ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT



## Female Facility Gets Much Needed Storage!

During the first two weeks of September 2023, Zion Structures built the 16 by 24 shed on the Female Facility's grounds off the front visitors' parking lot. Facility Support Coordinator Herb Caldwell states, "The shed is a welcomed asset in storage and organization in Painesville." Herb worked diligently with Zion Structures staff to ensure the construction project went smoothly and the agency got a well-built shed that will last well into the future. Since moving into the facility (formally the Lake County Minimum Security Jail) On June 21, 2016, the lack of storage space has always been an issue that has gotten worse over the past eight years. According to Executive Director Jake Jones, "this size shed should help alleviate the problem for at least another year or two," as he laughed and smiled.

# Partnerships and Collaboration

## Judge Rice Visits Female Facility

On October 31, 2023, Judge Cynthia Rice of the Trumbull County Court of Common Pleas visited the Female Facility. Judge Rice recently started the special docket for women offenders in Trumbull County. Female Facility Director Jennifer Melvin played host to Judge Rice during the visit.

After taking Judge Rice on a tour of the facility, Ms. Melvin provided the judge with information about the services the women receive during their four to six months in the program, which included a discussion on the behavior management system, treatment groups, the Moving On curriculum, and the process used to match programming to the women's needs.

Judge Rice met Mental Health Services Administrator Antonette Washington and learned about the distinctive role Ms. Washington plays in working with female residents who have mental health issues.

Judge Rice also met with Anastasia, one of the women participating in the Judge's Women's Therapeutic Docket. Judge Rice commented that she noticed an improvement in Anastasia's attitude since she entered the facility. According to Ms. Melvin, the Judge "seemed to be impressed with the facility, and she gave several compliments about the size/layout of the facility, the open visibility, how we're running the programming."

Any stakeholder interested in a tour of the Painesville or Warren facilities should contact Deputy Director Kim Massary to arrange the date & time. Ms. Massary can be reached at [k.massary@neocap.org](mailto:k.massary@neocap.org) or (330) 675-7459.



L to R –Judge Rice, Anastasia Stroock, Jennifer Melvin



## Gauga County Adult Probation Chief Nicole Walker Appointed to FGB

Since 2018 Nicole Walker has been the Chief Probation Officer at the Geauga County Common Pleas Court. Nicole began her career as a probation officer in 2006 at the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. While in Lake County, Nicole served as a probation officer in the general and juvenile divisions. Nicole has worked in the criminal justice field for over seventeen years. She is a member of the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association and the Homeless Coalition in Geauga County. Nicole is excited about the prospect of serving on NEOCAP's Board.



## Catholic Charities offers Funding for Citizens' Reentry!

On September 13, 2023, Male Facility treatment staff gathered in the conference room, while Female Facility treatment staff joined via Zoom to hear a presentation by Susan Kilpatrick of Trumbull County Catholic Charities. Ms. Kilpatrick presented information on funds their agency makes available to cover rent & securities, utilities, license reinstatement, and other state identification fees for individuals reentering the community following incarceration. According to Clinical Director Kristina Henik, "This program is greatly needed, and I am excited that the Trumbull County Residents in need of housing and other assistance can apply for these services."



## Partnerships and Collaboration



Oktoberfest on the Square, Grape Smashing Contest!

The Trumbull County Historical Society (TCHS) Held its 8th Annual Oktoberfest on the square in downtown Warren on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Executive Director Jake Jones, a TCHS Board member, volunteered at the Event. "It was my first time attending an Oktoberfest event, and I enjoyed the German food that was served and the entertainment and various German culture events," expressed Jones.



Executive Director Jake Jones volunteers at food tent .



**The Management Team  
would like to wish  
all the best to you and  
yours this holiday season.**

**May the holiday season  
end the present year on a  
cheerful note and make  
way for a fresh and bright  
New Year.**



**Left to right: Kristina Henik-Clinical Director, Lisa Rowe-Operations Director, Jennifer Melvin-Female Facility Director, Kim Massary-Deputy Director, Jake Jones-Executive Director, Rob Blower-Business Director**



Rob Blower  
Business Director

## WARREN FACILITY NEW FLOORING PROJECT SET TO START

The next major capital improvement project is set to start. As previously informed, NEOCAP was awarded state Capital Improvement funds to replace all the flooring throughout the Warren facility (that has not already been replaced). These areas include common areas, resident dorms, group rooms, offices, closets, kitchen, and all restrooms. We are prepared to start this huge undertaking sometime in January 2024. The contractors will start on Unit 1 and complete all areas of that unit before moving to other areas of the facility. This project will take everyone's communication, cooperation, and patience to go as smoothly as possible.

### Holiday Schedule 2024

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Day:</u>	<u>Holiday Observed:</u>
1/1/2024	Monday	New Year's Day
1/15/2024	Monday	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
2/19/2024	Monday	Presidents Day
5/27/2024	Monday	Memorial Day
6/19/2024	Wednesday	Juneteenth
7/4/2024	Thursday	Independence Day
9/2/2024	Monday	Labor Day
10/14/2024	Monday	Columbus Day
11/11/2024	Monday	Veterans Day
11/28/2024	Thursday	Thanksgiving
12/25/2024	Wednesday	Christmas
1/1/2025	Wednesday	New Year's Day

### Dental Benefit Update:

Effective January 1, 2024 we are increasing the NEOCAP Dental Benefit Plan.

#### What is changing?

The Calendar Year Maximum Benefit and the Maximum Lifetime Orthodontia is increasing from \$1,000 to \$1,500, plus we are removing the age limit on orthodontia. Additionally, tooth implants will be covered and not considered "cosmetic".

#### What does this mean to you?

If you, a spouse, or dependent is over the age of 18 and has a need for braces, or a tooth implant, the procedure will now be covered up to \$1,500. This benefit was only available in our current plan to dependents under 18 years of age, only covered up to \$1,000, and implants were not a covered procedure.

## Facility Governing Board (FGB) Approves Conversion Plan:

On November 16, 2023, the FGB approved the implementation of the Trumbull County—NEOCAP Conversion Plan. This new benefit works as follows: NEOCAP Employees who meet the qualifying criteria may convert sick and vacation leave or choose only to convert either sick or vacation. To qualify for the plan, employees must have a balance of 180 hours of sick leave to cash out sick leave and at least 120 hours of vacation to cash out vacation hours. The maximum number of sick hours allowed to be cashed out in a calendar year is 40. The maximum number of vacation hours allowed to be cashed out in a calendar year is 80. The amount of sick and vacation converted cannot exceed the total amount of time earned, during the calendar year, less any time used during the calendar year.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with Business Director Rob Blower.

### Newsletter Committee

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